

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LUSAKA 1082

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, ZA, CG, AO, MOPS
SUBJ: ZAIRE-ZAMBIAN RELATIONS AS VIEWED BY FONMIN MWALE

REF: LUSAKA 1048

SUMMARY: IN A MEETING APRIL 21 WITH THE AMBASSADOR AND
DCM, FONMIN MWALE OUTLINED THE GRZ' VIEW ON SHABA DEVELOP-
MENTS, STRESSING THAT GRZ VIEWS SHABA AS BASICALLY AN
INTERNAL AFFAIR, DEPLORES INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE
CONFLICT AND WOULD LIKE MOBUTU TO STOP DENYING ZAIRIAN
RESPONSIBILITY FOR BOMBING ZAMBIAN VILLAGE. END SUMMARY.

1. MWALE SAID THE SHABA INCURSION, EVEN IF IT ORIGINATED
IN ANGOLA, WAS BASICALLY AN INTERNAL ZAIRIAN AFFAIR.
THAT THE INCURSION OCCURRED REFLECTED BADLY ON MOBUTU'S
ABILITY TO PUT HIS OWN HOUSE IN ORDER. FACT THAT
KATANGESE WERE WELCOMED BY LOCAL SHABA POPULATION DEMON-
STRATES THE LONG NEGLECT OF THAT PROVINCE BY MOBUTU.
INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE CONFLICT WITH THE ARRIVAL OF
"FRANCE'S CUB," THE MOROCCAN'S IS NOT WELCOMED BY THE GRZ.

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2. WHEN ASKED ABOUT ZAMBIA'S COMMITMENT TO THE
PRINCIPLE OF TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AS IT APPLIES TO
THE SHABA INCURSION, MWALE SAID THAT ZAMBIA STANDS BE-
HIND THAT PRINCIPLE. ZAMBIA IS AIDING ITS ZAIRIAN
BROTHERS WITH PETROLEUM PRODUCTS AND HAS URGED UPON
ANGOLA AND ZAIRE THE NEED FOR NEGOTIATIONS UNDER THE
OAU MANTLE.

3. MWALE ADDED THAT ZAIRE WAS A DIFFICULT NEIGHBOR AT THE BEST OF TIMES. THERE HAVE BEEN CONTINUAL BORDER PROBLEMS INVOLVING THE PEDICULE AND THE ZAIRIANS HAVE INSISTED IN THE PAST ON IMPOUNDING ZAMBIAN VEHICLES. ZAIRIAN SMUGGLERS ARE NOTORIOUSLY ACTIVE.

4. THE BOMBING OF ZAMBIAN TERRITORY HAS PLACED ANOTHER STRAIN ON ZAMBIAN-ZAIRIAN RELATIONS. FIRST MOBUTU'S ROVING AMBASSADOR APOLOGIZED AND PROMISED REPARATIONS, THEN MOBUTU DENIES ZAIRIAN RESPONSIBILITY AND BLAMES THE RUSSIANS FOR THE INCIDENT. MWALE SAID THE ZAMBIANS ASKED ABOUT MOBUTU'S STATEMENT BLAMING THE RUSSIANS, WHICH "NO ONE COULD BE EXPECTED TO BELIEVE." THE ZAIRIAN EMBASSY REPLIED THAT MOBUTU STOOD BEHIND HIS APOLOGIES AND PROMISE OF REPARATIONS. "THEN WHAT DOES MOBUTU DO?" HE ASKED. HE PERSISTED IN TELLING PUBLIC RALLIES AND FOREIGN REPORTERS THAT THE ANGOLANS ARE RESPONSIBLE. GRZ RECOGNIZES THAT MOBUTU HAS TO ADDRESS HIS HOME AUDIENCE, BUT ZAMBIA HAS THE SAME PROMBLEM. ZAMBIANS ARE DEMANDING TO KNOW WHAT THE GRZ IS GOING TO DO ABOUT THE BOMBING INCIDENT. MWALE ALSO BROUGHT UP ZAIRIAN PRESS' CRITICISM OF THE FRONTLINE AS NOT BEING HELPFUL TO MAINTAINING GOOD ZAMBIAN-ZAIRIAN RELATIONS.

COMMENT: ZAMBIANS AT RESPONSIBLE LEVELS HAVE TOLD FRENCH THEY HAVE NO OBJECTION TO THE ASSISTANCE BEING RENDERED ZAIRE. MWALE'S CONTRADICTORY COMMENTS TO US IS A MEASURE OF ZAMBIAN AMBIGUITY TOWARDS THE SITUATION. THEY RECOGNIZE THE ANGOLANS MUST BE INVOLVED AND DO NOT WANT ZAIRE DISMEMBERED BUT THEY
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ARE EQUALLY OPPOSED TO AN ESCALATION IN THE FIGHTING (PARTICULARLY INVOLVING FOREIGNERS) WHICH WOULD BE NECESSARY TO STOP THE PROCESS. THEIR HOPE IS FOR OAU NEGOTIATIONS, IN WHICH THEY WOULD BE WILLING TO PARTICIPATE, RESULTING IN THE KATANGESE BEING PERMITTED TO REMAIN IN SHABA UNDER THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. OAU SEC GEN MBOMA ETEKI IS IN LUSAKA, AND THIS APPROACH IS UNDOUBTEDLY THE SUBJECT OF CONVERSATIONS WITH HIM. MWALE'S CONCERN OVER MOBUTU'S INSISTENCE ON BLAMING THE ANGOLANS AND RUSSIANS FOR THE BOMBING INCIDENT IS UNDERSTANDABLE. ZAMBIA'S NATURAL INCLINATION IS TO TRY TO BE EVEN HANDED BETWEEN ANGOLA AND ZAIRE DESPITE GRAVE RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF THE SHABA AFFAIR. MOBUTU'S PERSISTENCE IN PUBLICLY DENYING ZAIRIAN RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE BOMBINGS MAKES THIS TASK MORE DIFFICULT FOR MWALE AND OTHERS IN THE GRZ.
LOW

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